

for they were glad right for the noveltee
To han a newe lady of hir toun.
Namore of this make I now mencoun;
But to Grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,
And telle hir constance and hir bisynesse.

ALl bisy was Grisilde in everythyng
That to the feeste was apertinent;
Right noght was she abayst of hire
clothyng,
Thogh it were rude and somdeel eek torent.
But with glad cheere to the yate is went,
With oother folk, to greet the markysse,
And after that dooth forth hire bisynesse.

With so glad chiere his gastes she receyveth,
And konnyngly, everich in his degree,
That no defaute no man aperceyveth;
But ay they wondren what she myghte bee
That in so povre array was for to see,
And koude swich honour and reverence;
And worthily they preisen hire prudence.

In al this meenewhile she ne stente
This mayde and eek hir brother to commend
With al hir herte, in ful benyngne entente,
So wel, that no man koude hir pris amende.
But atte laste, whan that thise lordes wende
To sitten down to mete, he gan to calle
Grisilde, as she was bisy in his halle.

GRISILDE, quod he, as it were in his pley,
How liketh thee my wyf and hire beautee?
Right wel, quod she, my lord, for, in
good fey,
A fairer saugh I nevere noon than she.
I prey to God yve hire prosperitee;
And so hope I that he wol to yow sende
Plesance ynogh unto youre lyves ende.

O thyng biseke I yow, and warne also,
That ye ne prikke with no tormentyng
This tendre mayden, as ye han doon mo;
for she is fostred in hire norissyng
Moore tendrely, and, to my supposyng,
She koude nat adversitee endure
As koude a povre fostred creature.

AND whan this Walter saugh hire
pacienc,
Hir glade chiere and no malice at al,
And he so ofte had doon to hire offence,
And she ay sad and constant as a wal,
Continuyng evere hire innocence overal,
This sturdy markys gan his herte dresse
To rewen upon hire wyf's stedfastnesse.

THIS is ynogh, Grisilde myn, quod he,
Be now namore agast ne yvele apayed;
I have thy feith and thy benyngnytee,
As wel as evere womman was, assayed,
In greet estaat, and povrelliche arrayed.
Now knowe I, deere wyf, thy stedfastnesse.
And hire in armes took, and ganne hire kesse.

And she for wonder took of it no keep;
She herde nat what thyng he to hire seyde,
She ferde as she had stert out of a sleep,
Til she out of hire mazednesse abreyde.
Grisilde, quod he, by God that for us deyde,
Thou art my wyf, ne noon oother I have,
Ne nevere hadde, as God my soule save!

This is thy doghter, which thou hast supposed
To be my wyf; that oother feithfully
Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed;
Thou bare hym in thy body trewely.
At Boloigne have I kept hem prively;
Taak hem agayn, for now maystow nat seye
That thou hast lorn noon of thy children tweye.

And folk that ootherweys han seyde of me,
I warne hem wel that I have doon this deede
For no malice, ne for no crueltee,
But for tassaye in thee thy wommanheede,
And nat to sleen my children, God forbede!
But for to kepe hem prively and stille,
Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.

WHAN she this herde, aswowne down she
falleth
for pitous joye, & after hire swownyng
She bothe hire yonge children unto hire calleth,
And in hire armes, pitously wepyng,
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kysyng
ful lyk a mooder, with hire salte teeres
She batheth bothe hire visage and hire heeres.

WHICH a pitous thyng it was to se
Hir swownyng, and hire humble voys to
heere!
Grauntmercy, lord! that thanke I yow,
quod she,
That ye han saved me my children deere!
Now rekke I nevere to been deed right heere;
Sith I stonde in youre love and in youre grace,
No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace!

O tendre, O deere, O yonge children myne!
Your woful mooder wende stedfastly
That cruel boundes or some foul vermyne,
Hadde eten yow; but God, of his mercy,
And youre benyngne fader, tendrely
Hath doon yow kept. And in that same stounde
At sodeynly she swapte adoun to grounde.

And in hire swough so sadly holdeth she
Hir children two, whan she gan hem tembrace,
That with greet sleighte and greet difficultee
The children from hire arm they goone arace.
O many a teere on many a pitous face
Doun ran of hem that stoden hire bisyde;
Annethe abouten hire myghte they abyde.

WALTER hire gladeth, and hire sorwe
slaketh;
She riseth up, abaysed, from hire traunce,
And every wight hire joye and feeste maketh,
Til she hath caught agayn hire contenance.

Walter hire dooth so feithfully plesauce,
That it was deyntee for to seen the cheere
Betwix hem two, now they been met yfeere.

Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme saye,
Han taken hire, and into chambre gon,
And strepen hire out of hire rude array,
And in a clooth of gold that brighte shoon,
With a coroune of many a riche stoon
Upon hire heed, they into halle hire broghte,
And ther she was honured as hire oghte.

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,
for every man and womman dooth his myght
This day in murthe and revel to dispende,
Til on the welkne shoon the sterres lyght.
for more solemne in every mannes syght
This feste was, and gretter of costage,
Than was the revel of hire mariage.

AL many a yeer in heigh prosperitee
Liven these two in concord and in
reste,
And richly his doghter maryed he
Unto a lord, oon of the worthieste
Of al Ytaille; and thanne in pees and
reste

his wyves fader in his court he kepeth,
Til that the soule out of his body crepeth.

His sone succedeth in his heritage
In reste and pees, after his fader day;
And fortunat was eek in mariage;
Al putte he nat his wyf in greet assay.
This world is nat so strong, it is no nay,
As it hath been of olde tymes yore,
And herkneth what this auctour seith therfoore.

This storie is seyde, nat for that wyves sholde
folwen Grisilde as in humylitee,
for it were inportable, though they wolde;
But for that every wight, in his degree,
Sholde be constant in adversitee
As was Grisilde; therefore Petrak writeth
This storie, which with heigh stile he enditeth.

for sith a womman was so pacient
Unto a mortal man, wel moore us oghte
Receyven al in gree that God us sent;
for greet skile is, he preeve that he wroghte.
But he ne tempteth no man that he boghte,
As seith Seint Jame, if ye his pistel rede;
he preeveth folk al day, it is no drede,

And suffreth us, as for oure exercise,
With sharpe scourges of adversitee
ful ofte to be bete in sondry wise;
Nat for to know oure wyl, for certes he,
Erwe were born, knew al oure freletee;
And for oure beste is al his governaunce;
Lat us thanne lyve in vertuous suffraunce.

But o word, lordynges, herkneth, er I go:
It were ful hard to fynde now a dayes

In al a toun Grisildis thre or two;
for, if that they were put to swiche assayes,
The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes
With bras, that thogh the coyne be fair at eye
It wolde rather breste atwo than plye.

for which heere, for the Wyves love of Bathe,
Whos lyf and al hire secte God mayntene
In heigh maistrie, and elles were it scathe,
I wol with lusty herte fressh and grene
Seyn yow a song to glade yow, I wene;
And lat us stynte of earnestful matere:
herkneth my song, that seith in this manere.



GRISILDE is deed, and eek
hire pacienc,
And bothe atones buried
in Ytaille;
for which I crie in open
audience,
No wedded man so hardy
be tassaille
His wyves pacienc in hope
to fynde
Grisildis, for in certain he shal faille!

O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,
Lat noon humylitee youre tonge naille,
Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence
To write of yow a storie of swich mervaille
As of Grisildis pacient and kynde;
Lest Chichevache yow swelwe in hire entraille!

folweth Ekko, that holdeth no silence,
But evere answereth at the countretaille;
Beth nat bidaffed for youre innocence,
But sharply taak on yow the governaille.
Emprenteth wel this lesson in youre mynde
for commune profit, sith it may availle.

Ye archewyves, stonde at defense,
Syn ye be strong as is a greet camaille,
Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon offense.
And sklendre wyves, fieble as in bataille,
Beth egre as is a tygre yond in Ynde;
Ay clappeth as a mille, I yow consaille.

Ne dreed hem nat, doth hem no reverence;
for though thyn housbonde armed be in maille,
The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his brest, and eek his aventaille.
In jalousie I rede eek thou hym bynde,
And thou shalt make hym couche as dooth a
quaille.

If thou be fair, ther folk been in presence
Shewe thou thy visage and thyn apparaille;
If thou be foul, be fre of thy dispence,
To gete thee freendes ay do thy travaille;
Be ay of chiere as light as leef on lynde,
And lat hym care and wepe, and wryng and waille!

Here endith the Clerk of Oxenford his Tale.